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Security Council

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Letter dated 22 February 2016 from the Permanent Representative of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

I have the honour to transmit to you the attached letter from the National Coalition of Syrian Revolution and Opposition Forces (see annex).

I would be most grateful if you would have the present letter and its annex circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Matthew **Rycroft**

16-02928 (E) 250216

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Annex to the letter dated 22 February 2016 from the Permanent Representative of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

19 February 2016

On behalf of the National Coalition of Syrian Revolution and Opposition Forces, it is with great urgency that I draw your attention to the dire humanitarian situation in Aleppo and across northern Syria, ahead of the Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs' briefing to the Security Council on Security Council resolutions 2139 (2014), 2165 (2014), 2209 (2014) and 2258 (2015).

Since 2 February 2016, Russian and Syrian forces have led a brutal attack on Syria's largest city, killing at least 129 Syrian civilians in Aleppo and deliberately targeting civilian infrastructure. The joint offensive has exacerbated the refugee crisis, forcing tens of thousands of civilians to flee towards the Syrian-Turkish border. Vital facilities have repeatedly been struck by intensified aerial bombardment. On 15 February 2016, air strikes destroyed or damaged six hospitals — including the only operational hospital in Azaz, Aleppo, and one primary health-care facility — including one operated by the Médecins Sans Frontières and one by the United Nations. The attachment to the present letter offers an overview of the harrowing humanitarian situation across Syria.

The attacks on Aleppo have heightened the civilian death toll and cut off health services to tens of thousands of people and medical personnel. They have also risked aggravating the sieges across Syria, with an impending siege of Aleppo threatening to condemn an additional 500,000 people to starvation. Already, over 1 million Syrians remain besieged in 46 areas across Syria, unable to access food, water and medical assistance. Siege Watch estimates that 96 per cent of all sieges are directly attributable to the Syrian regime.

The attacks on Aleppo, and the deliberate efforts to lay siege on this vital city, represent a gross violation of international humanitarian law, including Security Council resolutions 2139 (2014), 2165 (2014), 2209 (2014), 2258 (2015) and 2254 (2015), which demand that the Syrian regime "allow immediate humanitarian assistance to reach all people in need, in particular in all besieged and hard-to-reach areas". The deliberate targeting of hospitals and medical personnel furthermore represents a clear violation of international humanitarian law, including article 3, common to the four Geneva Conventions of 1949, which explicitly demands special protection for the wounded and sick, and prohibits hospitals, medical units and health-care personnel from being the objects of attack.

On behalf of Syrian civilians in Aleppo, I therefore call on Member States to:

(a) **Condemn** the recent escalation of aerial bombardment on Aleppo by the Syrian regime and Russia, in addition to all indiscriminate aerial bombardment and attacks against civilians, civilian targets and vital facilities;

(b) **Break the sieges across Syria**, not only in the areas reached on 17 February, but across all of the areas currently being starved into submission. If the achievement of humanitarian corridors is not possible because of Syrian regime

intransigence, then it is imperative that Member States airdrop aid to Syria's 46 besieged communities;

(c) **Protect civilians from indiscriminate aerial bombardment**, including by enforcing a no-bombing zone to stop the indiscriminate air strikes across Syria;

(d) **Ensure accountability** for war crimes, including those perpetrated by the Russian Federation, and take steps to establish a special international tribunal for Syria, should Security Council paralysis prevent the referral of the situation in Syria to the International Criminal Court.

The attacks by Russia and the Syrian regime in Aleppo and elsewhere also run counter to ongoing efforts to achieve a political solution in Syria and a rapid cessation of hostilities. If any ceasefire is to be achieved, it is imperative that all parties — including the Russian Federation, which is now responsible for almost half of all civilian deaths in Syria — cease their indiscriminate attacks on civilians. It is unconscionable that an agreement ostensibly meant to lead to the "cessation of hostilities", such as the 12 February Munich agreement, not include one of the leading killers of civilians in Syria and a major driver of the refugee crisis. The failure of the international community to take steps to deter Russian and Syrian regime bombardment, protect civilians, or to demand that Russia refrain from its indiscriminate killing throughout Syria, will only condemn more Syrians to death and lead to the further deterioration of the humanitarian situation.

(*Signed*) Najib **Ghadbian**
Special Representative to the United Nations

Attachment

Civilian deaths, besiegement and detainment in Syria

January 2016

- **Total civilian deaths**: 1,085 civilians were killed in Syria in January 2016, according to the Violations Documentation Center.
- **Air strikes**: 70 per cent of all civilian deaths in January (or 762 of 1,085 civilian casualties) were due to air strikes, according to the Violations Documentation Center.
- **Barrel bombs**: At least 1,428 barrel bombs were dropped by Syrian regime forces in January 2016, killing 22 civilians — 7 children and 4 women — and damaging at least two vital facilities, according to the Syrian Network for Human Rights.
- **Other causes of death**: 117 civilians killed by shelling, 44 by shooting, 59 in detention, 37 during kidnappings and 23 in explosions, according to the Violations Documentation Center.
- **Russian attacks**: 49 per cent of all civilian deaths were caused by Russian air strikes, including 94 children and 73 women, according to the Syrian Network for Human Rights; 57 per cent of massacres (or 33 of 58 massacres) were committed by Russian forces, killing 129 children and 65 women, according to the Syrian Network for Human Rights.
- **Attacks on vital facilities**: Russian forces were responsible for 46 per cent of attacks on vital facilities (44 vital facilities), according to the Syrian Network for Human Rights. Syrian regime forces targeted 34 vital facilities, according to the Syrian Network for Human Rights; 16 medical facilities were attacked, 10 medical personnel and civil defence cadres were killed in January 2016 by Syrian regime forces and Russian forces, according to the Syrian Network for Human Rights.
- **Sieges**: Over 1 million Syrians are besieged in 46 areas across Syria, including Madaya, Damascus, Homs, Deir Ezzor and Idlib governorates; 96 per cent of areas under siege (or 44 of 46 besieged areas) are besieged by the Syrian regime, according to Siege Watch.
- **Detention**: The Syrian regime is detaining tens of thousands of people at any one point in time, and most deaths in detention occur in Syrian intelligence services, according to the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic.

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Agenda item 34
Prevention of armed conflict

Security Council
Seventy-first year

Letter dated 24 February 2016 from the Permanent Representative of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to transmit herewith the text of a crucial statement of the Supreme Command of the Korean People's Army issued on 23 February 2016 with regard to a grave situation on the Korean Peninsula caused by the United States of America and south Korea (see annex).

I should be grateful if you would have the present letter and its annex circulated as a document of the seventieth session of the General Assembly, under agenda item 34, and of the Security Council as soon as possible.

(*Signed*) **Ja** Song Nam
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

16-02958 (E) 290216

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Annex to the letter dated 24 February 2016 from the Permanent Representative of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Crucial statement of the Supreme Command of the Korean People's Army

Pyongyang, February 23 (KCNA) — The Supreme Command of the Korean People's Army (KPA) issued the following crucial statement on Tuesday, 23 February 2016:

The US imperialists and the south Korean puppet forces are making desperate efforts after being taken aback by the first successful H-bomb test of Juche Korea and its successful launch of earth observation satellite Kwangmyongsong-4.

As the hysteric farce for adopting resolutions on "sanctions" at the United Nations, madcap military moves for stifling the DPRK with all types of nuclear weapons and all unprecedented "options" against the DPRK could not break the will of the DPRK, the US and the south Korean puppet forces have now turned to their last gambling.

That is the "collapse of social system" through "beheading operation" targeting the supreme headquarters of the DPRK.

The US imperialist aggression forces' nuclear-powered submarine North Carolina has already entered Pusan Port, F-22A Stealth fighter-bombers have been deployed in the Osan air force base and special operation troops of the US imperialist aggressor forces are finding their way to south Korea one after another to get involved in the operation.

The first special warfare corps of the US Army, 75th commando regiment, special commando regiment of the US marines, 720th special tactics corps of the US air force, special warfare team Seal and other special operation troops have already been deployed in fields. Their operation missions are to strike major strategic targets including the supreme headquarters and nuclear and strategic rocket force bases of the DPRK in wartime.

Never has there been such a time as now when almost all the special operation troops of the ground force, navy, marines and air force of the US that earned an ill fame in the past overseas aggression wars, and the aggression troops that go operational for the so-called "high-density strike" have found their way to south Korea all at once.

The US and the south Korean puppet forces openly bluster that they will examine the feasibility of the combined "beheading operation", a key programme of new OPLAN 5015, and the "removal operation" of nuclear and strategic rocket forces of the DPRK at the upcoming Key Resolve, Foal Eagle 16 joint military exercises.

The "beheading operation" touted by the enemies means a pre-emptive strike for "removing in advance the one empowered with the mandate of order" to deter the "use" of the nuclear and strategic rockets of the DPRK.

The gravity of the situation is that the south Korean puppet forces are frantically joining the gangster-like US in the implementation of "beheading operation", not content with introducing nuclear war means of the US into south Korea to kill the compatriots in the north.

The above-said "beheading operation" and the moves to "bring down the social system in the DPRK" are the height of hostile acts against it.

The service personnel and people of the DPRK regard the supreme headquarters of our revolution as dearer than their own lives.

All the service personnel and people of the DPRK are ready to immediately and mercilessly punish without slightest leniency, tolerance and patience anyone provoking the dignified supreme headquarters even a bit.

The Supreme Command of the Korean People's Army clarifies the following principled stand reflecting the will of all the angry service personnel and people to take a thousand-fold revenge upon the enemies in view of the situation that has reached the dangerous phase which can never be overlooked any longer.

From this moment all the powerful strategic and tactical strike means of our revolutionary armed forces will go into pre-emptive and just operation to beat back the enemy forces to the last man if there is a slight sign of their special operation forces and equipment moving to carry out the so-called "beheading operation" and "high-density strike".

Our primary target is the Chongwadae, the centre for hatching plots for confrontation with the fellow countrymen in the north, and reactionary ruling machines.

The Park Geun Hye group of traitors has long been disqualified to live in this land as it has recklessly introduced nuclear war means of its US master to bring a nuclear disaster to this land, desperately decrying the DPRK's nuclear deterrent and successes made in space development, treasures common to the Korean nation.

The group will have to pay a very high price for its high treason to get the sun eclipsed and destroy the cradle of our life.

If the enemies persist in their foolish military action, failing to come to their senses despite the DPRK's crucial warnings, the DPRK will stage the second striking operation to totally eliminate its very source.

The US imperialist aggressor forces' bases for invading the DPRK in the Asia-Pacific region and the US mainland are its second striking target.

The Korean-style striking operation, which has been in the making for several decades for the final battle against the US imperialists, robbers, will be an unimaginable retaliation war and reduce the cesspool of all evils to ashes never to rise again on our planet.

They should bear this in mind.

The DPRK is possessed of the most powerful and ultramodern strike means in the world which are capable of dealing fatal blows at the US mainland any moment and in any place.

There is no need for the DPRK to keep secret about its military capabilities for which it has exerted all efforts to fight decisive battles with the US for more than half a century.

The US is fated to be punished and perish in the flames due to the DPRK's deadly strikes.

The doom of the US has been sealed.

Its strongholds for aggression are within the range of the DPRK's strikes and its weaponry is ready to open fire.

The US and south Korean puppet forces would be well advised to make the final choice: whether they are to face merciless punishment or opt for making apology, though belatedly, and putting the situation under control.

Nothing is more foolish and reckless than trying to make the sun sink.

The DPRK's service personnel and people, who are like manifold fortresses protecting the supreme headquarters of the revolution, will mercilessly frustrate any provocation of the hostile forces and dash forward more dynamically for the final victory of the great Paektusan nation.